

Occupational Hazard

by Apex Alpha

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Summary: [CURRENTLY ON HOLD] This story follows the actions of the 7th Shock Trooper Battalion, Jaeger Squad and their missions on the planet Victoria.

1. Prelude

Prelude

****July 9****th**** 2553, Outer atmosphere of Victoria****

An Autumn-class heavy cruiser drops out of hyperspace along with four Strident-class heavy frigates. The small fleet of ships hover above the surface of Victoria, a planet long uninhabited by Humans since the start of the Human-Covenant war. The planet has seen its fair share of Insurrectionist extremists and Covenant alike, being one of the first planets hit by the Covenant. Unknown at the time to the UNSC, the fleet sent to glass the planet was re-routed to assist in the invasion of Arcadia, leaving the planet and its human inhabitants safe from Covenant threat.

Two frigates move closer to planet whilst the cruiser and the other frigates stay farther back. The frigates looming closer to the planet come to a halt, each ship positioning themselves parallel to the planet with their bellies facing the surface of the planet. Within seconds, several pods are dropped from both ships, speeding towards the planet and leaving behind trails of red flame. The pods race to the surface of the planet, fueled by nothing but kinetic energy and the planet's own gravitational pull. Within minutes, the pods disappear inside the planet.

Meanwhile, on the bridge of the Autumn-class heavy cruiser; the UNSC Throne, the captain stands over a large table relaying the positions of the pods on the planet. The captain slides his hand on the table, bringing up a new holographic interface, this one showing a live 3D feed of the surface of the planet. The planet is dense with jungle with very rare pockets of desert.

"Captain Hurst, all pods have safely breached the atmosphere and have landed on the planet."

"Thank you Michael, have the ODS Teams proceed to their objectives and have Pelicans on standby." Replied the captain, in an assuring tone.

"Yes sir." The A.I dematerializes from the table and proceeds to execute his new orders.

The Captain looks and nods at the communications officer who appears to patch him through to the fleet's communication system.

"Men and Women of Victoria Tactical Task Fleet, we have arrived in the Tauri system and are hovering above the lost planet of Victoria." Said the captain over the intercom.

"Twenty years ago, this planet was invaded by the Covenant with the intent of glassing it and its inhabitants."

"As you can see, that hasn't happened, which is exactly why we're here. This planet has been void of all means of communications since the start of the war until a few months ago, when we received a distress signal originating from this planet."

"Our job is to investigate the distress signal as quickly and efficiently as possible. Make no mistakes ladies and gentlemen for there is still danger out there." The captain proceeds to his chair as the crew of the Thorne and other ships scramble to work as a year of expedition awaits them.

* * *

><p>Thanks for reading this short introduction, I plan to do more depending on the reviews this gets.

2. Chapter I: Uninhabited

****Chapter 1: Uninhabited****

July 9th 2553, Surface of Victoria

The forest teems with activity. Creatures resembling monkeys from Earth scale the high tree line, leaping across the air from tree to tree. Flocks of birds fly above the forest, they're ample in numbers. The trees are large, dwarfing even the largest of Oak trees on Earth with vines hanging down from broad branches hundreds of meters in the air.

The forest goes quiet as men in dark suits tread across the forest, each one having their guns pointed at different directions. The men wear black armoured suits, each of the wearers being Orbital Drop Shock Troopers, the most elite of the UNSC Marine Corps.

The ODS Teams remain silent moving towards the objective highlighted by the Heads Up Display inside their helmets. Their displays also shows a targeting reticule, weapon information, ammo capacity, and a basic health readout. The ODS Teams are given the most sophisticated equipment

in the whole Marine Corps with only the SPARTAN Program overshadowing them.

Jaeger squad was the first squad to reach their first objective, followed by Tiger and Crimson.

"This is Jaeger One to all teams, Jaeger Squad has reached the first objective, awaiting other teams, over."

"Roger, Tiger complies."

"Crimson copies."

The men of Jaeger Squad take cover behind a large boulder which was sitting next to a stream flowing downhill.

"This place is amazing, I'd definitely take my wife here had she survived the glassing of Reach."

"How the hell did she fall for someone like you?" Replied Colton (Jaeger Three) reminding Hartley (Jaeger Five) of his some-what sociopathic personality.

Hartley grins.

"Watch your sectors, we don't know if rogue Covenant are on this planet." said Walker (Jaeger Lead) in a direct tone.

"Lead, Tiger squad approaching from the West."

"Copy Two, give them the signal."

Jaeger Two signals the other squad, giving them the all clear to advance. They see the signal and make their way towards Jaeger's position, scanning the forest as they tread slowly. They reach the stream and set up a perimeter around the boulders.

"Where's Crimson?" asked Walker to Tiger Lead.

"Not far behind, one of their pods had trouble opening, should be fine."

Walker nods at the fellow ODST and turns to Walsh (Tiger Two) who was crouching behind a rock.

"Have Colton and Hartley scout a two hundred meters ahead."

"You really think Colton and Hartley can work together?" replied Walsh in a slightly sarcastic but professional tone.

Walsh was Walker's second in command, his most trusted out of the five men.

"Just do it." Walker shoots back.

Walker turns back to the other squad leader who aiming his weapon downstream.

"We're sitting ducks, Crimson better move fast or I'm moving without them." Said Walker in an impatient tone.

"Do so, we'll wait back here for Crimson, and resistance should be very unlikely at the outpost."

Taking the other squad leader's advice, he gets up and rallies the rest of the squad, signaling them to move forward. All three men sit up from their cover positions and advance towards Colton and Hartley's position, leaving only the five men from Tiger back at the boulders.

In front of the Squad, Colton and Hartley are crouched behind another boulder, both men are pointing their guns in the opposite direction of each other.

"So what exactly happened to you in New Mombasa?" asked Hartley.

"What?"

"Just a rumor I heard from the other lads, they said you hit on an ONI chick."

Colton sighs.

"I had no idea at the time, she was in civilian clothing."

"Is that so?"

"How was I supposed to know ONI hired models to do their dirty work?"

"And I swear, she checked me out first."

Hartley starts laughing in pity, however gets interrupted by the radio.

"Jaeger Three and Jaeger Five, hold your positions, we're coming your way." Said Walker over the radio.

"Roger that Jaeger Lead, all's clear from here." Replied Colton.

"Just don't bring it up around the others."

The rest of the team arrive and continue towards the Military outpost, diverging from the path of the stream. The team heads to an area resembling the landscape on a Halo ring, an area plotted with hills and pine trees. They move quickly but carefully, the planet may be deemed "uninhabited" but that doesn't mean that danger isn't present. The team stop at the edge of a high cliff, each of the men take cover behind rocks and pine trees. Hartley, the team's designated marksman, lies flat on the ground. He brings up his SRS99-S5 AM (or, Sniper Rifle System 99-S5 Anti-MatÃ©riel) and looks into the scope.

"Outpost is up ahead, engineers obviously had a taste for crude metalwork."

"Any sign of the occupants?" Asked Walker.

"Beckett (Jaeger Four) has more life." Answered Hartley in his usual humorous tone.

Beckett doesn't reply, he was the squad's mute, the silent but deadly type of soldier. He has a habit of making his kills quick and clean, usually slitting throats open, or in more heated situations, shooting heads off with his custom made black BR85HB SR (or Battle Rifle).

"Jaeger One to all teams, Outpost has been spotted 500 meters from our position." Said Walker over the radio.

There's nothing but static over the radio.

"I say again, Outpost has been spo-"

"THIS IS TIGER LEAD, WE'RE BEING AMMBUSHED, REQUEST IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE, WE'RE STILL AT THE RENDEZVOUS POINT, UNKNOWN NUMBER OF-" the audio stops.

"TIGER ONE WE'RE EN-ROUTE TO YOUR POSITION." Shouts Walker over the radio.

A loud explosion is heard off in the distance, followed by the sound of small-arms fire.

"We need to move, NOW!"

The whole squad looks stunned, none of them expected life on the planet, let alone a surprise attack by unknown assailants. Each of them thought this would be a routine scouting mission on some uninhabited planet. Just as the squad beings to move, streaks of purple spikes rain down upon them.

Plasma rounds.

3. Chapter II: Dark Titanium

Note: This chapter contains more dialogue than action. It could be deemed as "boring", although that is entirely a matter of taste. It is not a follow-up to Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will continue on from the first chapter. Enjoy.

* * *

<p>Chapter 2: Dark Titanium

June 2nd 2553, Earth

"Captain Hurst, I'm sure you're well aware that the Office of Naval Intelligence rarely make mistakes."

Maxwell Hurst found himself inside an office, face-to-face with a very stern looking woman.

"You have NO RIGHT to pull me from my family for an undertaking based on PURE SPECULATION!" shouted the Captain, infuriated by the orders he was given prior to his meeting with Captain Serin Osman.

"We wouldn't have tasked you with this if we had any doubts of your capabilities as a captain, nor would we have summoned you if we weren't entirely convinced." She shot back.

"You were recommended for this mission by Admiral Parangosky herself."

"I am still adamant to this task." replied the captain in an assured tone.

"This is not a debatable matter Hurst."

"The hell it is," replied the captain, slamming the side of the table. "I was guaranteed leave after the Battle of Earth!"

"And that leave was administered and guaranteed by Admiral Parangosky." Said Osman. She spoke in an emotionless tone, unfazed by Hurst's anger.

Maxwell sits down and sighs, he realizes there's no use of arguing.

"Let me get this straight, you want me to take a small fleet of ships and explore a planet which was probably glassed since the start of the war."

"We want you to recon the planet, preferably with ODSTs, if you encounter something, report it back to us."

"And if we encounter rogue Covenant?"

"Hurst, you're travelling in an Autumn-class Heavy Cruiser which will be escorted by four new Strident-class heavy frigates."

"Just four?"

Osman doesn't reply, instead she stares at Hurst with a condescending look on her face. Hurst takes it as a sign to leave and exits the office, escorted by two security guards. As Hurst leaves, Osman swivels her chair around, facing a large monitor on the wall. The monitor turns on with Admiral Parangosky on the screen.

"He's agreed to do it." Said Osman.

"And?" replied the Admiral.

"He's rather unhappy about it."

The Admiral nods and the screen turns off, leaving Osman to stare blankly at the screen.

****June 5th 2553, Latvia Station, Upper Atmosphere of Earth****

Walker was sitting alone in the mess hall (of all places) to read Homer's The Odyssey. The Gunnery Sergeant was among the hundred other personnel in the canteen, each of the men were having various conversations.

"You're telling me it just crushed the guy's skull?"

"Nah man, not just the skull, they told me his whole body was mush."

"Jesus Christ," he pauses for a moment "you ever seen one up close?"

"A Brute? Nah man, I'm just an engineer."

Walker overs hears the two men chatting and walks over to them.

"I've seen one." Says Walker.

It takes a few seconds before they realize there's an ODS'T standing on front of them. The pair gasp in unison and sit up, saluting him.

"At ease."

Walker sits next to the engineer.

"What's your name?" Walker asks to the engineer.

"Harrison, Sir."

"And yours?" Walker asks to the man sitting across from him.

"Lincoln, I'm the helmsman of the UNSC Throne, Sir."

"Right, you two interested in a little story?"

"Ship's not going anywhere." Replied Lincoln.

Maxwell looks at Harrison who nods.

"Right."

"It was during 20th of October, 2552, The Covenant Invasion."

****October 20th 2552, Earth Orbit****

It was only a matter of time until the Covenant fleet arrived, Reach's fate would soon be Earth's. All remaining fleets were re-called to Earth for what would be humanity's last stand. There weren't many ships left to defend the planet since most of the fleets were destroyed defending the outer colonies. Three hundred Orbital Defense Platforms stayed closer to the planet while Battle groups patrolled farther from the planet. Not long after the Covenant were detected on their way to Earth, The Fleet of Sacred Consecration appeared right on Earth's doorstep. They were just shy of the Orbital Defense Platform's killzone.

Soon, the Battle of Earth began.

Meanwhile aboard the UNSC Say My Name, dozens of ODS'T Teams were preparing to drop, Jaeger Squad included. The ship had just been given orders to launch an ODS'T strike on the city of New Mombasa. The squad, with the exception of Walker, was standing around a large

table relaying a 3D Holographic image of the city with a CAS-class assault carrier hovering over it.

"That's what we're dropping into?" asked Hartley.

"You're not going to be needing that." said Colton, looking down at Hartley's sniper rifle.

Beckett sat close to the table, examining the map whilst playing with his combat knife.

Colton nudges his shoulder.

"Keep that close to you, it'll be tight in there."

Beckett looks at Colton for a brief moment before holstering the large jagged-edged blade into a holster on his left shoulder.

"The Solemn Penance, intel suggests that the High Prophet of Regret is aboard." said Walker as he walks into the room. The door shuts behind him, emitting a high-pitched hissing sound.

"They want us to kill Regret?" asked Walsh, who was standing with his arms crossed.

"They want us to board the ship." replied the Sergeant.

"So they think ODSTs aren't sufficient for assassinations?"

"It is not a question of sufficiency, rather a question of glory." said Beckett, surprising everyone in the room.

"â€¦There's your answer."

Now, the whole team was gathered around the large holo-table, each man examining the image. The city was quite large, one of the largest in Africa in-fact. New Mombasa was the epitome of third-world development. Towering skyscrapers were situated at the center of town, surrounded by hundreds of other buildings with the large Orbital Elevator not too far from the metropolis.

The Solemn Penance hovered just outside of the city, its size was almost that of the harbor. CAS-class assault carriers were only dwarfed by the much larger CCS-class super carriers. Even though they were large, they were numerous in the Covenant navy. It usually takes hundreds of ships to bring one down, unluckily for the UNSC, at least two of these vessels are present in one Covenant battle group.

An alarm went off in the room, indicating it was time for the ODSTs to drop. The squad gathered their equipment and ran to the pod room. Colton carried a Submachine gun with a silencer attached to the receiver while Hartley took his usual SRS99-S5 AM Sniper rifle. Beckett had a shotgun attached to this back and had his black battle rifle in hand, Walsh took a MA7B Assault Rifle, and Walker brought his DMR. They rushed through the metallic halls of the ship, catching up with the other ODST teams aboard. Upon arriving in the room, Beckett sat in the far left pod with Colton, Walsh, Walker, and Hartley sitting in the pods to his right. The pods began to move into place, across from the team, another ODST team had just dropped. Teams were never dropped all at the same time to prevent the pods

from hitting each other.

Seconds before their pods were released, Walker said some words over the radio.

"Don't aim for the center of the ship, aim for the rear where the engine rooms are located."

In a brief moment, their pods were racing towards the large vessel, they were launched just above the ship.

The engine trails from the other pods could be seen from Walker's perspective. The Orbital Elevator was broken in half with a graveyard of UNSC ships surrounding it. Several destroyed Charon-Class frigates could be seen during their descent. As they descend closer to the ship, a few pods from another team suddenly change courses, they seem to be headed towards the city rather than the ship. Inching closer to the ship, a massive wormhole opens up, followed by a massive flash of light that cripples all the pods. Just before The Solemn Penance entered slipspace, a frigate, the UNSC In Amber Clad, flies above the massive vessel and enters the wormhole with it.

The pods, now without power, plummet towards the city. Every single pod was flying in different directions, some flying into buildings, some flying straight into the sea. Walker struggles to regain control of his pod, he fights the controls in an effort to veer his pod closer in-land. All the alarms fitted into the pod were going off as the SOEIV falls. Walker's pod was now a hundred feet from the ground, he was still falling towards the ocean. He jerks hard on the control sticks, using his whole body to create momentum which only slightly alters his course.

With a loud splashing noise following by a muffled thud, the pod hits the shallow waters of the beach, knocking the ODST out cold.

****June 5th 2553, Latvia station****

"I was out for hours before regaining consciousness," said Walker "the pod landed in 4 meter deep waters, luckily the pod was still waterproof."

"Wow, and then what happened?" asked Harrison.

"I swam ashore, where I then linked up with the rest of the squad on the outskirts of the city and exfiltrated," he paused "the city was then glassed."

"You said most of the ODSTs dropping into the ship were killed when it entered slipspace?" asked Lincoln.

"Indeed, Jaeger only survived because we were in a slightly different course."

"And that squad that altered their course to the city?" asked Harrison.

"They survived, most of their squad were separated during the EMP."

"Wish I was enlisted during the war." Said Lincoln.

"No, no you don't, your ship would have probably been destroyed, and our ships didn't have shielding like they do now." Walker shot back.

"o..Oh." stutters Lincoln.

Hartley walks towards Walker with a bowl of food in his hand.

"Hey Sergeant, they need you over at the bridge." saids Hartley

"What for?" asked Walker.

"Not sure, they just told me to tell you." replied Hartley.

"Right, good meeting you Lincoln, Harrison."

Walker walks away and exits the mess hall, leaving Hartley with his new friends.

Harrison looks at Hartley who was chowing down on his food.

"You ever seen a Brute?"

Walker strolled the halls of the station, the walls were dark titanium with large glass windows and lights attached to the ceiling that illuminated the corridors. The floors were impregnated with lights that illuminated a dotted path for the person to follow, which in Walker's, case was the bridge. He took a left and was soon inside the large room. The walls were covered with glass with a clear view of Earth. In the middle of the room were 3 large holo-tables, larger than the ones on cruisers. On the edges on the room were panels displaying information with Navy personnel controlling them and then there was an elevator which leads to a room which controls the Orbital Defense Platform's MAC gun. Although the MAC gun was controlled by the platform AI, there was always a manual control panel for use in the event where the AI mainframe would be destroyed.

A Naval officer who spots Walker entering the bridge tells him that the Rear Admiral was waiting for him in his office. Walker then proceeds to the room which had the name of the Rear Admiral engraved into the side of the door.

"Ah, Sergeant Walker, please have a seat." said the Rear Admiral.

Walker sits.

"You're probably wondering why I summoned you."

"Yes Sir." replied Walker.

"Your team has been reassigned to the UNSC Thorne."

"Sir?"

"You've been reassigned to the Thorne, the ship is fairly new and needs complimentary ODS Teams."

The Admiral continues.

"In a month's time, the Throne will be attached to Battlegroup 16 to conduct reconnaissance on the planet Victoria."

"Victoria? Wasn't that planet glassed?" asked Walker.

"We _believed _it was glassed, however current intelligence suggests otherwise."

"Latest intelligence?"

"Five months ago, we detected a distress signal originating from the planet, more specifically, an outpost on the planet."

"And you want us to investigate?"

"Precisely."

"I understand Sir, but, to my understanding, Victoria is one of the outer colonies, and judging by the speed of radiowaves, the signal could have been sent a long time ago."

"We are assessing all possibilities, however, under these circumstances, it is crucial to look into the matter."

Walker momentarily pauses to assess the mission. Thoughts and questions race through his mind regarding the possibilities of how the signal originated.

"Understood, Sir."

Walker sits up and salutes the Rear Admiral before leaving the office.

End
file.